

**DRAFT MINUTES
SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
BJ's Restaurant
990 N. Center Street
Gaylord, Michigan
September 26, 2006**

Chairman Mr. Manson called the meeting of the Snowmobile Advisory Committee (SAC) to order at 10:34 a.m., Tuesday, September 26, 2006, in Gaylord, Michigan.

Members Present:

Bill Manson, Chair, Region III, Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA), Grand Rapids
James Duke, Region I, MSA, Munising
Bill Lucas, Region II, MSA, Cadillac
Lee Murray, At-Large, Hopkins
Jack Nelson, Business Community, Greenville
Orville Olson, Representative at Large, Ludington
David Thomas, Trail Sponsors, Marquette

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Randy Charles, USDA, Ottawa National Forest
Carol Boll, Huron-Manistee National Forest
Terry L. Johnson, Antrim County Sheriff's Department

Staff Present:

Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Steve DeBrabander, State Trails Unit Manager, FMFM, Lansing
Steve Kubisiak, Recreation and Trails Program Coordinator, FMFM, Lansing
Richard Kennedy, FMFM, Lansing
William O'Neill, FMFM, Gaylord
Don Klingler, FMFM, Gaylord
Joe Soncrainte, FMFM, Atlanta
Robin Pearson, FMFM, Gaylord
Loretta Cwalinski, FMFM, Gaylord

Mr. Manson welcomed everyone. The Committee, DNR staff and the audience introduced themselves.

MINUTES

The minutes of the June 20, 2006 SAC meeting was acknowledged. **Motion was made by Mr. Lucas to adopt the minutes of the June 20, 2006 meeting, seconded by Mr. Olson. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Subcommittee -- **Mr. Olson** reported they have collected financial information from the Department and the sub-committee will be meeting again in the next few weeks regarding the long range budget.

Law Enforcement Subcommittee -- **Mr. Murray** advised there was no report.

OLD BUSINESS

Snowmobile Workgroup Meeting -- **Mr. Radabaugh** reported the Snowmobile Workgroup met in August to discuss the 100% equipment purchase program. The following equipment limits will apply to the 2006-2007 snowmobile season: Groomer -- \$150,000.00 and Drag: -- \$15,000.00 The workgroup will continue to define future equipment packages with an eye toward long range program savings.

Mr. Manson added the workgroup is defining standard grooming equipment options for groomers. These specifications will be used to obtain price quotations from the manufactures. The idea is to develop standard equipment packages that meet grooming program needs at the best possible cost. The final option packages will hinge on finance sub-committee recommendation to the Department. Equipment options considered "luxurious" i.e. above the standard options set by the Department will be at the cost of the club.

Mr. Manson said older cost-shared equipment should still have trade-in value and that club equity needs to be considered. **Mr. Radabaugh** said trade-ins on cost-shared equipment will require further investigation and discussion with the workgroup to work out the details.

2005-2006 Snowmobile Trail Grooming Cost Analysis -- **Mr. Kennedy** summarized the grooming cost analysis handout. He reported approximately 483,000 miles were groomed last year. The reported statewide average fuel cost was \$ 1.54 per mile. He noted the 2005-2006 fuel payment was \$1.67 per mile after the fuel adjustment.

The initial grooming outlay for the 2006-2007 season will be based on \$3.90 per mile and will be adjusted in December to include workgroup recommendations and adjusted fuel costs.

2005-2006 Equipment Grants -- **Mr. Kennedy** reported 19 clubs (22 groomers) were eligible to receive equipment grants this round. An equipment list has been prepared and placed on the State Administrative Board agenda and will be eligible for approval on October 2. He noted four clubs have not returned their signed grant agreement to date. 2004 supplemental snowmobile funds will be needed to complete the proposed equipment purchase.

NEW BUSINESS

Allegan County Snowmobile Club -- **Rick Locatis** spoke for their club and referenced the information packets sent to the Committee. They feel their club is not receiving a fair

share of the grant money from the West Michigan Snowmobile Council. He said the club will no longer obtain landowner permission for the trail, or provide grooming support if they do not receive a separate grant.

Discussion ensued about grooming operations, expenses, reimbursements, and liability insurance.

David Lowe, President, West Michigan Snowmobile Council said the Allegan County Snowmobile Club wanted to separate from the council, but the council voted to keep the groups as they are. He said the council offered to meet and discuss the issues with the club. The council has been in existence for a long time and he believes it has worked very well.

The Committee will take this matter under advisement and make a recommendation to the Department within the next couple of weeks.

Insurance -- **Mr. Manson** reported after careful review the renewal date for liability insurance will remain April 15th. It was suggested the clubs add \$100 to the previous years insurance cost, at the time of grant application, to estimate insurance costs to accommodate potential premium increases.

Trail Proposals -- **Mr. Manson** asked if Fisheries and Wildlife Division must review snowmobile trail proposals located on private lands.

Mr. Kennedy said Fisheries and Wildlife Divisions do not review private land trail proposals but the proposal form should be reviewed and approved the appropriate FMFM unit manager and include appropriated documentation of land owner permission.

New Trail in Thumb Area -- **Mr. Manson** announced the formation of a new snowmobile club in the "thumb area" is working on a new snowmobile trail. It is all located on private land.

Gaylord to Cheboygan Trail -- **Mr. Manson** reported the Director signed the order to allow snowmobiles during winter months on the 11 mile stretch near Mullett Lake. There will be a 35 mph speed limit and a restriction on snowmobile operation between the hours of midnight to 8 a.m.

Mr. O'Neill reported the Department is currently working on a number of issues related to getting to get the trail ready for the snowmobile season. They include: finding grooming clubs, signing, brushing and addressing trail corridor encroachments.

STAFF REPORTS

Law Enforcement -- **Sheriff Terry Johnson** reported they just found two snowmobiles that were stolen two years ago. Antrim County Snowmobile Club getting geared up for this year. Sheriff's Association does not have any new information regarding to report concerning snowmobiling.

US Forest Service Report – Mr. Randy Charles, USDA, Ottawa National Forest reported the local snowmobile club is working on a trail proposal with Mr. Yesney for the Military Bridge project.

Mr. Radabaugh reported the Snowmobile Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the US Forest Service and Department has been signed.

Ms. Carol Boll, USDA, Huron-Manistee National Forest reported the Cadillac Manistee Ranger District is updating two cooperative agreements with local snowmobile clubs. A new trail segment east of M37 and M55 is complete. The Baldwin-White Cloud Ranger District staff met with the local snowmobile club and DNR staff regarding the 56th Street re-route. Forest Service plans to send scoping letter in November and plan to have NEPA completed in time for summer work season. Mio Ranger District completed trail improvements. They are working on 2.5 mile trail connector to Lupton, public scoping letter to be mailed in October. Huron Shores Ranger District – Iosco County Parks and Recreation Commission (ICP&RC) is developing a trail proposal for M-65 bridge trail. Forest Service completed ground surveys for proposed trail on National Forest land. Forest Service will do public scoping when ICP&RC obtains agreements or easements across land belonging to Michigan Department of Transportation, telephone company, bait store, Consumers Electric, county and private lands.

Recreation Specialist Reports -- Ms. Pearson referred the committee to her written report and added the Gaylord snowmobile club requested additional signs for keeping snowmobiles off active railroads. Signs were ordered and will be provided to the clubs.

Mr. Kennedy reported the trail sign contract has been awarded. Signs will be delivered to the clubs as soon as possible once production and manufacture is complete.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Bud Martin, Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club – was hoping to have seen special maintenance items on the agenda; they just got amendments from last year's grants that should have been done in June or July. They have a lot of special maintenance that need to be done especially from wheel damage. Also, Ogemaw County has approved ORV's to ride the shoulder of county roads to trailheads. He believes ORV's are not using the ORV trails, but coming onto snowmobile trails instead. **Mr. Martin** added that there is clear-cutting on one of their trails that needs repair due to the loggers. He added concern that the section may not be groomable.

Don Carroll, Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club asked what the Department procedure is to get approval for catastrophic equipment repair. He was advised to have necessary repairs made and advise his field contact. The club must pay the first \$1000, after that it is a 75/25 match. He inquired on the status of a trail proposal. He was advised to provide a copy of the land permission from the county to his field contact. **Mr. O'Neill** will follow-up on status of trail proposal. **Ms. Pearson** said she would provide a checklist to Mr. Carroll. He was referred to the snowmobile handbook for further guidance on the trail proposal process.

John Houk, P.I.S.T. & N.E. MI Council questioned starting a trail that the field contact should look at before a proposal and be involved from the beginning. Also, the railroad grade into Rogers City has been owned by the Department for three years and he feels that the process is taking longer than what it should. **Mr. Radabaugh** said the trail will not be open this winter as they are negotiating for the trail which is still in their attorney's hands. The Department is concerned over safety, especially since the quarry is still active. A question was raised, if the Department could look into opening the trail as a snowmobile trail first, and then pursue the multi-use trail. **Mr. Manson** suggested writing the Attorney General's Office.

Jeff Persondek, R.H.T.C. questioned the 100% equipment purchase program; who owns the equipment, and who will insure it? **Mr. Manson** said the club will own the equipment and it must remain in the program. Once equipment is bought, that is the trade-in towards the next one. If the equipment cost is split 60/40, the 40% stays with the club. **Mr. Persondek** asked if the equipment is owned entirely by a club if bought in 2001 - the answer was yes it is. Discussion continued on their new purchase.

Dan White, Ogemaw Hills Snow Club said they can fund their own program, but the program is not meant for clubs to make money.

Bud Longroy, Ogemaw Hills Sno Club asked about Event Permits. He said based on the new fee schedule and event with 100 participants could have a fee exceed \$1000. He referenced an event where the original fee was \$800. Later it was "re-scored" and reduced to \$450, then down to \$150. His question is what can the clubs expect the costs to be? **Mr. O'Neill** explained it will depend on the number of participants, intensity and duration of use and monitoring. He explained this is a new fee schedule and process and that additional guidance will be provided to staff.

Tom Gallagher, St. Helen Snow Packers added that the event started at a Township park.

George Zajac, Trailriders, Baldwin said that Lake County is pushing for their county roads to be open to ORV's and repairs to those roads will be needed.

Don Mraz, St. Helen Snow Packers had a question regarding grant reimbursement for insurance. Mr. Kennedy said insurance payments will be based on actual documents costs.

NEXT MEETING

The next SAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 7, 2006 at 9:00 a.m., Best Western, M-28 East, Wetmore.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Public Present:

Don Reed, Michigan Snowmobile Assoc
Don Carroll, Ogemaw Hills Snow Club
Kaye Houk, Presque Isle Snow Trials
Allen Cottle, Soo Snow Assoc, EUP
Snow Council
Ray Compeau, Alpena Snow Assoc
David Becker, St. Helen Snow Packers
Don Mraz, St. Helen Snow Packers
Tom Gallagher, St. Helen Snow Packers
Robert Fenner, St. Helen Snow Packers
Al Persondek, R.H.T.C
Jeff Persondek, R.H.T.C.
Tom Kozlowski, R.H.T.C.
Joe McGuire, Allegan Co. Snow Club
Jim Conley, Allegan Co Snow Club
Lowell Kage, R.H.T.C.
Tom Koscinski, R.H.T.C.
Jackie McGuire, Allegan Co. Snow Club
Nancy Locatis, Allegan Co. Snow Club
Jim Dingman, Trailriders – Baldwin
Mary A. Caskey, Jordan Valley Trls Cl
William R. Caskey, Jordan Valley Trls Cl
Rick Locatis, Allegan County Snow Club

Bud Martin, Ogemaw Hills Snow Club
Bob Eller, Alpena Snowmobile Assoc.
Rodney Altman, P.I. Snow Trails
John Houk, P.I. & NE MI Council
Larry Marzcan, Alpena Snow Assoc
Jerry Janeski, Alpena Snow Assoc
LaVerne Longroy, Ogemaw Hills Sno
Club
Dan White, Ogemaw Hills Snow Club
Don Kauppi, Keweenaw Trail
Services
Ken Stigeres, Keweenaw Trail
Services
George Zajac, Trailriders – Baldwin
Rolland Rieger, P.I. Snow Trails
Don Schomisch, Allegan Co. Snow
Club
Rod Locatis, Allegan Co. Snow Club
Bradley Porter, W MI Snow Council
Denny Zoet, W MI Snow Council
David Lowe, W MI Snow Council
Al Green, Cadillac Winter Promotions